**Perception: From Seeing, to Thinking, to Writing**

**References:**

Montgomery, Julie L., and Wendy Baker. “Teacher-Written Feedback: Student Perceptions, Teacher Self-Assessment, and Actual Teacher Performance.” *Journal of Second Language Writing* 16.2 (2007): 82-99. Print.

As the authors state, “The purpose of this study was to examine teachers’ self-assessments of their written feedback and to compare these assessments with (1) students’ perceptions of this written feedback, (2) the actual written feedback given, and (3) the teachers’ reactions to these ﬁndings. It is hoped that such comparisons

will provide a greater understanding of how and how well written feedback addresses the needs of L2 writing students. This article deals specifically with teachers and how they are effectively reaching their ELL students through assessment and feedback” (83). This article was interesting to us because it deals with how students perceive feedback and assessment from a teacher – an area we had not originally considered when discussing the idea of students’ perception and how it affects writing. It is important to consider how our comments and feedback can affect how students edit and revise their own writing. There are some worksheets attached to the article that are also useful for gaining a sense of how your students react to teachers’ comments and context of their background.

Paull, Michael. “Invention: Understanding the Relationship Between Sensation, Perception and Concept.” *College Composition and Communication* 25.2 (1974): 205-209. Print.

“I have become increasingly aware that my students do not look directly at their world. In their classroom discussions and in their writing, they tend to rely on conventional interpretations of experience as embodied in clichés or the language of others. That is, all to often they put their trust in learned responses, what they assume to be the language of the classroom” (Paull 205-206). From these first couple of sentences, Paull’s article poses the dilemma he faces, and the rest of this article proposes some different ways he has approached helping his students realize the importance of how their perceptions affect their writing. For this activity, we have adapted one of the exercises mentioned where students take an object and are asked to write down their own descriptions of the object before sharing them with the class. This activity helps students see, particularly if more than one student has the same object, how different people can look at the exact same thing and come up with completely different writing pieces.

Pollington, Mary F., Wilcox, Brad, and Timothy G. Morrison. “Self-Perception in Wrting: The Effects of Writing Workshop and Traditional Instruction on Intermediate Grade Students.” *Reading Psychology* 22 (2001): 249-265. Print.

This article presents an interesting study of students’ performance and self-perceptions about their writing in relation to the writing method they are taught with in their classroom – either a traditional model or a writer’s workshop model. This study interested us after our class discussions regarding different methods teacher have at their disposal to present writing topics to their students. This article goes through how they set up their study for fourth and fifth grade students, and how the researchers used the “writer self-perception scale for their assessments. “The Writer Self-Perception Scale (WSPS), developed by Bottomley et al. (1997/1998), was normed with students in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, making it particularly appropriate for this study. This is the first scale of its kind to be normed nationally. The WSPS was designed to measure writer self-perception on five dimensions: General Progress, Specific Progress, Observational Comparison, Social Feedback, and Physiological States. The instrument consists of 38 statements about writing; one of these, Number 15, is a general item (“I think I am a good writer”), while the remaining 37 may be divided among the five areas of specific interest” (Pollington 258). This scale allowed researchers to view how students thought their own writing skills developed, and this study concluded the same sentiments we have heard in class – “that no one method will suit every child or every teacher” (Pollington 262).

**Lesson Activities:**

**Fly-Swatter Game**

This is a game that can be adapted for almost any type of classroom and subject. For our purposes, a PowerPoint slideshow will be prepared with slides that have two different words on them relating to parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc). Students will be broken into teams, and one member from each team will come up and use their fly-swatter to hit the correct word when the teacher calls out the desired part of speech to be identified.

**Word-Picture Folds**

This activity helps students see how perceptions affect what a student writes. Each person will be given a piece of paper with a word (in this case a noun) at the top. The first person will draw a graphic representation of the word they see. They then fold the word back so only the picture shows at the top of the page. They pass their paper to another classmate, and the next person writes down what they think the picture is. They pass the paper to another classmate, and that next person draws a picture based on the word the previous person has written. This process can continue for as long as the paper (or time) allows.

**Diamante Poem**

This a poetic form that allows students to create a poem based on various parts of speech. Our use of this poem is to have students describe, with the requested parts of speech, how their word evolved in their word-picture fold.

**Perception Free Write**

This last activity brings together the ideas put forth in the whole lesson. Each student will be given a piece of paper with a word on it. Two students will each have the same word, and students are to write a short free write (about 1 paragraph in length) about their word. Whatever that word makes them think of, they write down.